

# Dr. Fihn receives Rotary Polio Pioneer Award

by Gary Nolte, End Polio Now Zone 28 Coordinator

Dr. David Fihn was the Governor of Rotary District 5580 1985-1986. After his year as Governor, Polio Eradication was named Rotary International's Corporate Project. He accepted the chairmanship of the Polio Challenge in the initial effort. District 5580 is one of the largest districts in the North American Rotary world. District 5580 is located in all of North Dakota, northern Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and southern Ontario, Canada. A diagonal line drawn from Bowman, ND in the southwest to Marathon, Ontario, Canada, is 1800 miles. At his own expense, he traveled to each club in the district to solicit funds and pledges to eradicate polio. The results were nothing short of being incredible. Out of 55 clubs, only four failed to pledge. Several clubs required multiple visits, but in the end, donated their fair share. In total, District 5580, under Dr. Fihn, pledged \$750,000 US and most pledges were paid in 1987 and were completed by 1990. This he did after serving his year as District Governor and working full time as a dentist. He kept detailed, hand-written records which I have utilized in my work as District 5580 Polio Eradication Chairperson. Dr. Fihn has been my mentor in this polio eradication challenge during my time as District Polio Chair. I am now serving as End Polio Now Zone 28 Coordinator.



Hoping the year 2005 was to be the year we could declare the world polio-free, District 5580 Rotarians believe Dr. Fihn should have the honor; he again stepped in to chair the polio eradication effort.

Dr. Fihn along with his wife, Shirley, have been on numerous international missions that were not for polio eradication but to conduct dental clinics in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, and serving the Vietnamese boat people in refugee camps. They have also conducted dental missions in Central and South America, serving the indigenous and poor people. Dr. Fihn also has worked at the local Technical School as an advisor in the dental program and participated in free dental clinics.

District 5580 is proud to nominate Dr. David Fihn for the Rotary Polio Pioneer Award.